

Chilliwack Board of Education Trustee Survey

What do you believe is the role of a School Trustee in relation to staff, students, and the broader public education system?

A trustee is a governor, not a manager. In relation to staff, that means setting policy and direction, and holding the Superintendent accountable for how the district runs — not directing staff or intervening in individual personnel matters. In relation to students, it means every policy decision gets measured against one question: does this improve outcomes and wellbeing for kids in our classrooms? In relation to the broader system, a trustee is a bridge — carrying the concerns of this community to the provincial level, and carrying provincial policy and funding realities back to the community honestly, even when that's an uncomfortable conversation.

What does respectful leadership look like to you when working with fellow Trustees, district staff, unions, and the community?

Respectful leadership means disagreeing on ideas without attacking the people holding them. Trustees won't agree on everything — that's the point of having a board rather than one person — but the board has to be able to have a hard debate in the room and still function as a team once a vote is taken. With district staff and unions, it means recognizing that governance and operations are different jobs, and not confusing "accountability" with "interference." With the community, it means actually listening before deciding, not just before announcing.

How would you balance individual beliefs with the responsibility to uphold Board decisions, district policy, and the Trustee Code of Ethics?

I can advocate hard for a position at the table, and I should — that's what the community elected me to do. But once the board votes, I'm bound by that decision and by the Code of Ethics, whether or not I personally agreed with the outcome. That doesn't mean pretending I agreed when I didn't. Board votes are a matter of public record, and I think voters deserve to know how I voted and why — that's basic accountability to the people who elected me. What I won't do is actively campaign against a decision after it's passed just because I lost the vote. There's a real difference between being honest about my position and undermining the board's ability to function.

How will you ensure Indigenous education and reconciliation remain meaningful priorities beyond symbolic commitments?

Reconciliation isn't one thing, and it doesn't mean the same thing to every Indigenous person — including within my own family. As Métis, I've seen how differently this lands depending on someone's specific history and relationship to the Crown, and I think boards do a disservice when they treat it as a single script everyone is expected to recite. What I want from this board is less symbolism and more scrutiny: are our commitments producing real outcomes for Indigenous students, or are they producing good optics?

Concretely, that means tracking the same things we'd track for any other district priority — Indigenous student achievement and graduation rates, representation in staffing, how the local First Peoples' Principles of Learning actually show up in classrooms — and reporting publicly when we're falling short, not only when there's good news to share. It also means building real, ongoing relationships with Stó:lō Nation and rights holders in this territory, not a single consultation we point back to for years.

What is your understanding of the importance of safe, inclusive, and welcoming schools for all school community members, including Indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, people with disabilities, and the marginalized?

I believe kids should get to be kids for as long as possible, which is why our platform's focus is academics — we see a lot of the current social debate in education as a distraction from that core job. That said, safety and inclusion for everyone isn't optional, and "everyone" has to actually mean everyone. That includes girls having single-sex changing rooms, without exception. It includes parents remaining the primary decision-makers for their own children — not the last to find out when something changes about how their child is being treated at school. I don't think a board that quietly cuts parents out of that loop is practicing inclusion; I think it's avoiding a harder, more honest conversation with families.

I say this as the father of three Indigenous kids. My daughter Maggie is 15, neurodiverse, and uses a wheelchair part of the time. My two sons are full status too, and went through this district's schools years ago. I've been living inclusion in my own home for over fifteen years, and I know the difference between support that's real and support that just looks good.

How will you ensure your decision making is informed by evidence, educational expertise, and the lived realities of classrooms?

I don't think trustees should be designing curriculum or pedagogy — that's not our expertise, and pretending otherwise is how boards end up making bad decisions. My job is to ask staff and educators the right questions, look at the data they bring us, and be honest when a policy sounds good in a meeting but isn't matching what's happening in the classroom. That last part is where lived experience matters — talking directly with parents, staff, and students, not just relying on a report that's already been filtered through several layers before it reaches the board table.

What are your thoughts on transparency and meaningful consultation with education partners, including teachers, support staff, Indigenous rights holders, parents, and students?

Consultation only means something if people can see their input change the outcome, or get a clear explanation of why it didn't. A board that consults everyone and then does what it was already planning to do isn't really consulting — it's checking a box. I'd rather have fewer, more genuine consultation processes than a lot of surveys that go nowhere

How would you advocate for adequate provincial funding and improved classroom conditions for students and staff?

I'll start by being precise about language, because it matters: there's no such thing as "provincial funding" or "government funding" — there's taxpayer funding, administered by the province. When trustees, union reps, or anyone else talks about "getting more provincial funding," what they're actually asking for is more of your money and mine. I think that distinction should stay front and centre in every budget conversation this board has, because it changes the question from "how do we get Victoria to give us more" to "how do we make the case to the people paying for it that this is worth the cost."

With that said, yes — this district needs to advocate, hard, for adequate funding and better classroom conditions. That means the board being specific and evidence-based about where the gaps actually are — class composition, support ratios, facilities — and making that case directly to

the Ministry, to the BC School Trustees Association, and publicly to the taxpayers footing the bill, so they can see exactly what their money is and isn't buying.

What do you see as the biggest challenges currently facing public education in our district, and what role should Trustees play in addressing them?

The biggest challenge in this district is academic performance — specifically, the basics. Our Grade 4 literacy results have been running below the provincial average, and while there's been a partial rebound since the pandemic, we haven't recovered fully, and too many kids are still not on track. That matters more than almost anything else this board discusses, because reading, writing, and math are the foundation every other outcome — graduation, mental health, opportunity — is built on. A student who can't read confidently by Grade 4 is fighting an uphill battle for the rest of their time in this system.

The Board's role isn't to write curriculum, but it is to make academic excellence in the fundamentals a stated, measured priority — not one item among a long list, but the anchor. That means asking staff pointed questions about what's working, funding what the evidence says actually moves the needle on literacy and numeracy, and being transparent with the public about where we stand year over year, not just when the numbers look good.

What kind of public education system do you want future generations to inherit, and how will your leadership contribute to that vision?

I want kids in this district to inherit a public system that families trust enough to stay in — one that's flexible enough to meet a kid where they are, honest enough to admit when something isn't working, and resourced enough to actually fix it rather than just study it. My contribution is asking harder questions from the board table than have been asked before, and being willing to have an uncomfortable conversation in public if that's what it takes to get a real answer, rather than settling for the comfortable one.

Cary Moore